

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the above-identified application in view of the foregoing amendments and following remarks is respectfully requested.

Status Of Claims

Claims 1 and 3-17 are pending in this application. Claims 1, 6, 11 and 16 are amended herein. No new matter is added.

Objections

Claims 1 and 3-17 have been objected to because of informalities (e.g., insufficient antecedent basis in claims 1, 6, 11 and 16).

In response, each of claims 1, 6, 11 and 16 have been amended as shown above addressing the objections directed to the claims.

Applicants respectfully request that these objections be withdrawn.

Response to Claim Rejections under 37 U.S.C. § 102(b) and 37 U.S.C. 103(a)

In paragraph seven (7) of the Final Office Action, claims 6, 8-11 and 13-15 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,352,327 to Yano et al. ("Yano") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,598,951 to Ikemoto et al. ("Ikemoto").

In paragraph eighteen (18) of the Final Office Action, claims 1, 3-5, 7, 12, 16 and 17 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Yano in view of Ikemoto and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,217,149 to Takagi et al. ("Takagi"). \

Independent claims 1, 6, 11 and 16 have been amended for further clarification. In particular, each of claims 1, 6, 11 and 16 recites, *inter alia*, "number of the first print elements is equal in number to an integer times the number of drive blocks."

In the present invention as featured in amended claims 1, 6, 11 and 16, a plurality of print elements divided in a number of time-division drive blocks include first print elements and second print elements (overlapping print elements). The number of second print elements is equal in number to an integer times the number of drive blocks, as is the case with the first print elements. As a result, a total number of print elements including the first and second print elements is equal in number to an integer times the number of drive blocks.

With the features of the present invention as discussed above, drive circuits for driving the first print elements can be constructed by the number of drive blocks the same as that of the first print elements. That is, in a chip having the first and second print elements, all the drive circuits for driving these print elements can be constructed in the same way.

First of all, neither Yano nor Takagi shows or suggests the first print elements of the present invention as discussed above. In Ikemoto, nozzles positioned in an overlap portion may correspond to the first print elements of the present invention. However, in Ikemoto, the number of nozzles in the overlap portion is not equal in number to an integer times the number of drive blocks. For example, referring to Fig. 17 of Ikemoto, the number of nozzles in the overlap portion is three while the number of drive blocks is six. As a result, a total number of these nozzles is nine which is not equal in number to an integer times the number of drive blocks. Therefore, in Ikemoto, drive circuits for driving the nozzles in the overlap portion can not be constructed by the drive blocks the same as that of the other nozzles. That is, in a chip having nine print elements as shown in Fig. 17 of Ikemoto, the drive circuits for driving three nozzles in the overlap portion can not be constructed in the same way as that of six other nozzles.

Accordingly, each of claims 1, 6, 11 and 16 as amended is believed neither anticipated by nor rendered obvious in view of the cited references (i.e., Yano, Takagi and Ikemoto), either taken alone or in combination, for at least the reasons discussed above.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of claims 1, 6, 11 and 16 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) is respectfully requested.

Applicants have not individually addressed the rejections of the dependent claims because Applicants submit that the independent claims from which they respectively depend are in condition for allowance as set forth above. Applicants however reserve the right to address such rejections of the dependent claims should such be necessary.

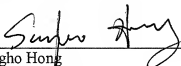
Applicants believe that the application as amended is in condition for allowance and such action is respectfully requested.

AUTHORIZATION

No petitions or additional fees are believed due for this amendment and/or any accompanying submissions. However, to the extent that any additional fees and/or petition is required, including a petition for extension of time, Applicant hereby petitions the Commissioner to grant such petition, and hereby authorizes the Commissioner to charge any additional fees, including any fees which may be required for such petition, or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 13-4500 (Order No. 1232-5326). A DUPLICATE COPY OF THIS SHEET IS ENCLOSED.

Respectfully submitted,
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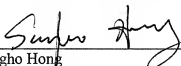
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